



FACE Program Fact Sheet

Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation

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Farmer Dies When he Falls and is Pinned Under Tractor Drawbar

BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program received reports of 102 occupational fatalities that occurred in 2000. Twenty-two of the victims were farmers or farm workers.

This fact sheet describes an incident where a beef farmer was pinned under a tractor drawbar and requests that farm safety professionals and farmers who operate tractors bring the listed recommendations to the attention of farm workers.

THE INCIDENT

A farmer refueled his tractor in the farmyard, in preparation for driving to a field to check his beef herd. He stood on a stepladder to reach the fuel cap, which was located on top of the tractor, about 65 inches from the ground. His habit was to place a 4-foot ladder on the tractor body in front of the left rear tire, climb two or three steps with the fuel pump in hand, remove the cap, fill the tank, replace the cap, and climb down the ladder. The farmer had a chronic disease that could cause dizziness, and had some leg weakness and joint pain.

On the day of the incident, he apparently replaced the cap after adding the fuel, and fell toward the tractor wheel, striking the shift lever and throwing the tractor into a forward gear. As the tractor began to roll forward, the victim and the ladder rolled up and over the left fender and fell upside down. The victim was caught between the left rear wheel and under the drawbar, while the tractor rolled forward about 6 feet until it was stopped when it struck a block wall. The victim was found by his sister-in-law, who went to the farm to investigate when he did not answer his phone for several days.



View of tractor with victim's location

RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent similar occurrences, farmers and others who use tractors should:

- **shift the tractor into park, set the brakes and turn off the engine before dismounting from the tractor. For tractors without a park position, farmers should shift into neutral, set the brakes and turn off the engine before dismounting.**
- **seek and follow medical advice and take precautions to prevent falls if there are medical conditions that could cause loss of balance.**

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, in agreement with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) conducts research on occupational fatalities. The Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program focuses on identifying factors that increase the risk of work-related fatal injuries. The Wisconsin FACE Program helps in the development and use of improved safety measures for preventing fatal work injuries.

PLEASE POST

FACE information is produced and distributed to provide current, relevant education on methods to prevent severe work-related injuries.

If you have comments or questions, please call the FACE Project at 608/266-7298, or write:

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